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THE
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THE
CHRISTIAN OBSERVATORY.

VOL. III.

JULY, 1849.

No. 7.

A SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE CONVENTION OF THE CONGREGATIONAL
MINISTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS, IN BRATTLE STREET MEETING-
HOUSE, MAY 31, 1849. BY NEHEMIAH ADAMS, PASTOR OF
ESSEX STREET CHURCH, BOSTON.

II. TIM. I. 12. — For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep
that which I have committed unto him against that day.

ASSURANCE of faith is justly expected of one whose professional business is to persuade men to believe. An ambassador is expected to be fully assured with regard to the nature and terms of his negotiation. It is as much to be expected of a minister of Christ that he shall feel sure of the way of salvation which he proposes to men, as that a pilot should be able to say to a ship-master in the offing, I am sure that I can take you to port. A guide who is uncertain as to the way, is no guide. A teacher who does not know assuredly that which he professes to teach, is so far an impostor.

A minister of Christ cannot be expected to speak with certainty of things in religion upon which revelation is silent. But he is justly expected to say what things are revealed to faith, and to inculcate them; there must be in his mind certain truths relating to God, and man, retribution, and the way to be saved; these truths must be as positively fixed in his mind as the rules of grammar and of numbers are in the belief of a school teacher. If there be any meaning in his name, ambassador for Christ, there must be some things about which he is fully assured that they are essential to his own salvation and that of his hearers.

In answer to this, some will say, Men, and even ministers, differ with regard even to the fundamental truths of the gospel. If they are all fully assured of the doctrines they teach, some must be assured of things which are erroneous; for of two contradictory propositions, both cannot be true. Is it right, then, for any man to feel sure in his belief? What is there which is not disputed by able and apparently sincere men? In such circumstances, how can a man be expected to have assurance of faith? Is he justified in feeling sure that he is right?

The great business of ministers of the gospel, all acknowledge, is, to shew unto men the way of salvation. Whatever doubts a minister may have with regard to other things, so long as he holds his office he will, if he be an honest man, be sure that he is prescribing to men the way of salvation which God has appointed. Through constitutional infirmity of mind and excessive self-distrust, he may not, as a Christian, have assurance of faith, in the experimental sense of that expression, to as great a degree as others; but if he have a common degree of honesty, he will cease from being a Christian minister when he no longer feels assured that he understands the conditions of the gospel.

Assurance of faith, using the term faith in a doctrinal, rather than an experimental, sense, necessarily depends upon the clearness and certainty with which the way of salvation is revealed in Scripture. If the way of salvation be not fixed and clearly revealed, there can be no assurance of faith in preaching it; fundamental differences of opinion with regard to it are to be expected, and it is presumptuous for any man to feel assured that he is right.

My subject, then, is this: ASSURANCE OF FAITH IS WARRANTED BY THE CERTAINTY OF THE WAY OF SALVATION.

Is the way of salvation fixed and certain? I shall maintain the affirmative of this question. I remark, then,

I. IF THE WAY TO BE SAVED BE NOT FIXED AND CERTAIN, THE APPOINTMENT AND CONTINUANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IS PREPOSTEROUS.

The ascending Redeemer commissions his disciples in these words: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

If these men had no definite conceptions as to the way to be

saved, it is easy to imagine what a figure they must have presented when they began to preach. That they should undertake to preach at all would be strange. The burden of their preaching would have been this, That nothing in religion is fixed and certain, except a few truths in natural theology, together with the immortality of the soul. The great Teacher has indeed scattered some principles like seeds given to the winds; time may develop them; but as yet, no man can assert any thing confidently in revealed religion, except that life and immortality are more clearly brought to light. Being asked how men are to be saved, what could they answer, if they had received no definite instructions on that point? They had received instructions, however, to this effect: "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Being inquired of, What must we believe? of course they were prepared to teach certain truths, the belief of which was necessary to salvation. Unless this were so, and unless we as ministers now have, under the divine sanction, some fixed and certain way to be saved which we must preach to men, the establishment and the continuance of the Christian ministry is preposterous. The ministry may then be justly held up to the derision of the world as a profession without a science. Other professions have each a science. We, ministers, have nothing to minister but uncertainty, if there be no gospel. We are wandering Magi, for whom the star has never come and stood over the place where the young child is. If there be intrinsic uncertainty on the question, What must I do to be saved, for eighteen centuries we have been in a long dream; we are dreaming still, and when, alas! shall we awake?

II. IT IS REASONABLE TO SUPPOSE, IF THERE BE SALVATION FOR MEN, THAT THE WAY TO BE SAVED IS EXPLICITLY REVEALED.

Nothing is so important as the answer to the question, "How shall man be just with God?" If God is willing to save sinners, and reveals a way in which they may be saved, we might expect that meridian brightness would be concentrated on that way of salvation. Obscurity, uncertainty, here, are like obscurity and uncertainty in charts and light-houses.

In important concerns we demand certainty. We require that logarithms for the navigator be worthy of perfect confidence, transferable into nautical calculations without a doubt in the mind of the seaman. Our fellow citizen who detected and removed

an error in the *Mécanique Céleste* of La Place, established himself in the confidence of those who do business on the great waters. In the commercial world, uncertainty with regard to the policy of the government excites impatience and a panic. In the political world, we hear our fellow men calling out for something fixed and certain in the guarantee of their rights. The nations are demanding "written constitutions" at the point of the bayonet, — constitutions written in language plain and strong enough to make them feel safe in their vineyards and at their firesides, and to give them confidence at the Bourse. We may take the strong presumptive argument in favor of a revelation, viz.: It is to be supposed that a benevolent God would bestow a revelation upon man, and we may apply it here, saying, If God makes a revelation to man, it is to be supposed that He will make explicit disclosures of the way to be saved.

But further. Once being ascertained, that way to be saved must be so fixed and certain that it cannot be clouded by pretended revelations, human discoveries, or new interpretations. Schools of theology may not draw it into doubt; acuteness must not be able to detect a fallacy in it; improvements in literature and science, in the arts and the refinements of life, must not demonstrate the need of some other way of salvation. Discontent and unbelief must spend their arrows upon it in despair. Opinions may fluctuate from age to age with regard to many things in theology, but the earth's orbit must not be more exact and permanent than the path of eternal life. The pastor of the church at Leyden, on their embarkation for this new world, may say with regard to many things in the system of revealed truth, and we may still echo his belief: I am "very confident the Lord has more truth and light yet to break forth out of his holy Word." But, if he and his missionary band believe that, in all their discoveries and experience, they will find any new light on the question, What must I do to be saved? we must conclude they have not yet learned what be the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. In short, a man who proposes any thing new in answer to the question, What must I do to be saved? is as much a heretic as he who denies the existence of God. So momentous are the concerns of the soul, that if God provides salvation for men, we might expect that even the proofs of his own being would not be more fixed and certain than his revealed way of saving sinners.

III. FACTS PROVE THAT THE WAY TO BE SAVED IS REVEALED WITH CERTAINTY.

Wherever the Word of God has been received as the ultimate authority in religion, there has been such a concurrence of faith as regards the way to be saved as amounts to moral demonstration. It is as easy to learn the way of salvation from the writings of believers in all ages who have received the Bible as their supreme authority, as it is to learn the civil and literary history of those times. The truth on this subject, as well as on every other, has been by some perverted in every age, yet there has been a commonly received belief among the pious portion of mankind every where as to the way of salvation, and that belief has in all ages been the same. It has been held by Christians of different names, and of different persuasions as to many points in theology. Forms of baptism, modes of worship, disputes about original sin, special grace, and other things in great numbers, have divided Christian believers into sects and parties, and their contentions have been sharp; yet upon the question, What must I do to be saved? they have had but one answer to give, and that without any double meaning, or doubtful sense.

Among the poor and pious members of Christian churches, there is, at the present day, the same concurrence of views and feelings as to the way of salvation. Now the surest test of essential scriptural truth is the way in which it is received by the disciples of Christ in the humbler walks of life. Neither theological seminaries nor the writings of learned men are so sure and safe a guide with regard to the essential truths of religion as the opinions of humble and pious believers.

They subject their faith to the test of experience, not living as the learned are liable to do, in the world of speculation; but they depend upon simple truth as the daily bread of their spiritual life. Let a man present himself in one of our pulpits, professing to preach the gospel; the impression which he makes upon the humble, godly men and women, is the safest test of his doctrine and spirit, whether they be evangelical. If he be unsound or wanting in experimental piety, they will say he does not reach their hearts. The Saviour selected this as one of the proofs by which his forerunner might know that the kingdom of Heaven was at hand. If you sound a distinct note with your voice near a certain instrument of many strings, there are strings in that

instrument which will own the sound, and respond to it. You will hear their soft responses, if your sound be gentle ; or a loud and joyous answer, if such be the tone of your voice. So when a man, with his heart renewed by the Holy Ghost, speaks the truth as it is in Jesus, there are hidden sensibilities in the congregation, among the unlearned as well as the wise, which straightway respond in a thrill of approbation and pleasure. The gospel has made the larger part of its conquests among the humble poor, and, which is an equally noticeable and interesting fact, among the other sex. In the State Prison, man, in the Christian Church, woman, holds the priority of numbers. She that was first in the transgression has retrieved her reputation at the sepulchre of her Redeemer ; and if that Saviour is absent from our preaching, the first complaint will come from a Mary Magdalene, or from some other Mary, saying, " I know not where ye have laid him." Ask woman what is the way to be saved ; woman, of every kindred and clime, where the grace of God has shed its influence ; woman, who thus far constitutes the majority of the redeemed in heaven. The answer, in its unity, and sweetness, and power, will be like that of the innumerable company of angels.

A powerful testimony with regard to the way of salvation is found in the history of dying beds. You have known every way of salvation renounced in its turn by one and another as they came to die, except that way of peace with God which the Christian world receives as the only way of salvation. Should we gather the votes of the dying, if all those emaciated hands could be lifted up in testimony on this subject, we know what the result would be. Has any member of this Convention, has any Christian pastor, ever been addressed by a parishioner in such language as this : ' You have taught me the way of salvation by Jesus Christ ; I have embraced it, but now I feel it to be insufficient in my dying hour ? ' If there be any record or well-founded tradition of such a testimony, though in a single instance, we should be more concerned than when, as controversialists, we hear of an exhumed manuscript, or, as believers in the Old Testament chronology, are confronted with fossils older than Adam. The first Christian martyr seems to have given the tone note to the dying beds of believers since his day : — " Lord Jesus receive my spirit." That minister has reason to be happy who enjoys

these two kinds of testimony, the one to his natural, and the other to his spiritual, character : First, that the children love him ; and Secondly, that the broken in spirit, and the dying place a high value on his presence with them. Has any one of us, as a minister of the Gospel, ever been rejected or superseded at a dying bed ? An ecclesiastical council might depose that man, but this should not be to him the occasion of so much solicitude for his spiritual condition, as that a poor, dying believer in his church should prefer some other pastor for spiritual counsel and succor. In that honest hour, when the soul is ready to appear before God, we frequently have striking verifications of those words respecting the way to be saved : “ Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation ; he that believeth shall not make haste.”

IV. THE APOSTLES EXPLICITLY ASSERTED ONE, AND ONLY ONE, WAY OF SALVATION.

They witnessed the effects of the gospel when opposed by principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places. They saw it enter Cæsar’s household ; barbarians also, and slaves were subjects of its power. If we examine the testimony of these apostles on the question, Whether there was, in their view, any uncertainty in the way to be saved ? we hear them say : “ Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” “ Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again ; If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” “ Continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven.” “ Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints.” When Paul had said to Timothy, in the text, “ I know whom I have believed,” he added, “ Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” Paul, in his great experience as a Christian and minister, had not found occasion, when he came to die, to change his belief ; nor had he been so

affected with the diversity of views among religious teachers, nor by the preferences and idiosyncrasies of different minds as to feel that one thing is truth to one man, and another thing to another. As he resigns his ministry into the hands of Christ, this is the concluding word in his resignation: "I have kept the faith."

I proceed now to derive some practical inferences from the doctrine of this discourse.

1. *The opinions and preaching of a Christian minister should be characterized by definiteness and decision.*

Whoever may be uncertain in their professional knowledge, they who have in charge the ministry of reconciliation should be clear in their views, decided in the promulgation of them, and bold in their defence. The reasons are, that nothing can be more clear, nor be witnessed by a greater amount of cumulative evidence, than the gospel; and, moreover, nothing which man can do is so important in its consequences as to preach the gospel. Here let us distinguish between questions in morals, theology, and interpretation of the Scriptures, not essential to salvation, and the substance of the gospel. There is a way to be saved. A minister may be uncertain with regard to many questions belonging to his profession; but to that question, "What must I do to be saved," he must be as decided in his answer as it is possible in the nature of things for the human mind to be on any subject whatever. If he be not thus definite and decided, one of two things is certain: He either does not believe that there is danger of not being saved; or, He has never felt the power of the gospel on his own heart. If he does not believe there is danger of not being saved, the wonder is why he should preach, unless it be to contend, as a hireling, with those who assert the contrary; and if they should cease to preach, what would become of him? Or if he has never felt the power of the gospel upon his own heart, why should he presume to enter upon the most sacred and important calling of an ambassador for Christ? A decided, faithful application of the truth finds a defence for itself in the human conscience; while indecision and vagueness expose us to contempt. The gospel is not, like some sermons, an organ with only one stop, and that a flute-stop; it has a sub-bass and a swell; and we must not only "play skilfully," but sometimes "with a loud noise." There is a mutual adaptedness between the Gospel and

the human soul ; so that by manifestation of the truth, we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

2. *The certainty of the gospel forbids us to be indulgent of error.*

It is inconsistent for a believer, and especially for a preacher, of such a gospel as that which we profess, to have that kind of sympathy for unbelievers and men in error however apparently sincere, as will lead him to say, Your faith is good and sufficient for you, and mine for me. We must be able to explain to them the conditions of salvation revealed in Scripture, to say that our personal hopes for eternity rest on the belief and acceptance of the gospel, and that we cannot encourage them to expect final safety in any other way. If we cannot say this, we do not believe that there is any fixed and certain gospel.

We are indulgent of error if we give the right hand of fellowship to men of all religious opinions. He that does it shews that he knows of no gospel, the belief of which is essential to salvation. Some men can worship with equal satisfaction in any meeting-house, mosque, cathedral, or respectable pagoda, seeking only for evidences of sincerity on the part of the worshippers. If Paul and such a man should meet in such a city as ancient Athens, they would not worship in the same place ; for such a man would say, I can tolerate any thing but the dogmatism which insists on one particular belief as essential to salvation. The most transcendently beautiful thing in all Athens in the eye of such a man would be the altar, "to the unknown God" ; — such an outgoing of the religious sentiment in man's nature after the Absolute ; such a yearning in the children of nature after the pure and the true. Paul's spirit, it seems, was stirred within him, among the Athenians, in a different way. He preached to them of the last judgment, and of Christ, the final judge, because he had committed his own soul to Christ "against that day."

Yet there are some who insist, that we ought to be indulgent towards error, because, in opposition to the doctrine now maintained, they insist that there is nothing fixed and certain in religion, every thing being controverted, and private judgment, therefore, being the only possible standard of truth. In their view, some men are blessed with more faith than others, in the same way that some are blessed with better constitutions. They think that some are believers naturally, or by habit, or by education ; that

others, being less favored, believe less ; but being sincere, are equally acceptable with God. The way to heaven, in the view of some men, is like the uncertain and billowy sea, over which the frigate, the steamer, the merchant-man, and the fanciful pleasure-yacht are passing ; while here and there that little shell-fish, the nautilus, spreads its small sail and emulates the ships. Thus one man is strong in faith, while another has his little gospel, and is getting over the floods, perhaps, with less danger of being wrecked than the more pretending navigator, the great God looking upon him with equal complacency and acceptance ; and now to disturb such a man in his limited faith, is represented to be as though the merchant-man should harpoon the little nautilus, or the frigate fire at him. I need not stop to say how contradictory to all such fancies are the plain, bold, awful representations of God's word, by the mouth of his apostles. The thought of such effeminate sentiments from the lips of an apostle does no less violence to our opinions and feelings with regard to him, than to think of Peter, for example, joining with the daughter of Herodias in her favorite amusement, or Paul and Silas singing with the choir in Diana's temple.

What a contrast in the intellectual tone and vigor of such writings as the Epistles, and of those books and sermons which plead for indifference in belief. To read the one is like walking in a forest where the voiceful oaks and pines remind you of the everlasting sea ; while these effeminate and soft effusions of a sickly charity are beds of poppies gone to seed ; their seminal principle is narcotic, and received too far is death.

One man who pleads for indulgence of error, will point you to the "one hundred thousand various readings" of Scripture, and remind you that every book of the Bible has been called in question in Germany. Indeed, it may, in his view, be said of the Bible, as Addison makes the heathen Cato say of a future state, that "shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it." Whether such a man is qualified to preach the gospel, or whether he has any gospel to preach, seems hardly to admit of a question. A just retribution upon such a man would be, that he be appointed to preach before this Convention from this text assigned to him by vote of the body : "I am set for the defence of the gospel." A greater number than usual would, on that occasion, probably leave the house before the collection is taken up.

What is that state of mind which leads a man to represent every thing in religion as doubtful? How far is it from infidelity? By what motive can a man be influenced who loves to dwell on the false assumption that Christians have always differed essentially with respect to fundamental truth? Such a man may belong nominally to the most Orthodox denomination in Christendom, as some of this description claim that they do; but his religious belief, there is reason to fear, is affected more by the publisher's advertisements in Halle and Berlin, than by his Bible and his closet. If some German free-thinker has a work in press, such a man thinks of it with great expectation, and on its arrival runs to see it almost as he would the Messiah. He is agitated after reading it, because that Gnostic has borne him still further from his soundings than he was before; and with regard to his faith, he experiences a verification of our Saviour's threatening, "And from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

May the time come when our theologians will disdain to receive spiritual instruction from unregenerate men, or be dismayed at their speculations, whatever may be their scholarship. Of the wisest unconverted scholar it may be said, The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. There is more spiritual knowledge in Watts's Hymns for infant minds, than in all the writings of De Wette, Eichhorn, Paulus, Kuinoël, and Schleiermacher. Which of them has ever shed one ray of light on the greatest of all questions, What must I do to be saved? In ecclesiastical history, grammatical interpretation, geography, lexicography, and general grammar, we bow to the German scholars; but these are not the things by which, as the Scripture says, "men live." "Whether there be prophecies they shall fail, whether there be tongues they shall cease, whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away." While ignorance is not the mother of devotion, neither is learning. She is a handmaid to religion, not a mother. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. And "he that believeth hath the witness in himself"; receiving external evidences through the understanding, but relying most of all upon that inward persuasion, and assurance of faith, which, as a rational man, he feels must not be contrary to reason, while it is above reason. It was by this persuasion that Paul sustained his afflicted spirit before the contempt of intellectual unbelievers: "Nevertheless, I am not

ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." In the prospect of death he could say with joy, "I have kept the faith." No man was less indulgent towards error than the apostle Paul; yet, for our instruction and admonition be it said, who ever loved his fellow men more devotedly than he?

3. *The terrible denunciations in the Bible against false teachers, warn us to be well assured of our faith.*

Nothing seems to move the anger of God more than false doctrine, and they who teach it. There are no words which pierce to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit in a minister, more than the words of God to Ezekiel, warning him against indecision and unfaithfulness in delivering the message of the Lord. "O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die, if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his iniquity, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hands." By the mouth of Jeremiah, God says, "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture. Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them; behold I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord." Our Saviour never seems to have had his spirit stirred within him to indignation, except when speaking of false teachers. "Ye blind guides!" "Ye serpents! Ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell! Fill ye up then, the measure of your iniquities." "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." We have already seen in what tones Paul denounces false teachers. Even the beloved disciple cries out against them: "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed; for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds." But the Epistle of Jude seems to be one flaming thunderbolt against false teachers. It would seem as though there must have been verbal inspiration in the case of Jude, at least, to suggest such words of accumulated wrath. "Ungodly men," "filthy dreamers," "brute beasts," "clouds without water," "trees whose fruit withereth," "without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots," "raging

waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame, wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."

Then he summons up Enoch, the seventh from Adam, and makes him prophesy "against these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." He seems unwilling to cease from his invectives: "These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."

Now the reason of all this is, that there is nothing in this world so important as divine truth; for by this, instrumentally, with its sanctions, the souls of men are brought into allegiance to God. Truth, not force, is God's appointed instrument of governing the world. Hence, error is correspondingly dreadful, and the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against it. Here, now, is one important test by which we may try the doctrines which we call the gospel, and which we preach. Do we, like the apostles, feel assured that we are right, and that those who essentially differ from us are essentially wrong? The Apostles felt so. Their love to the souls of men constrained them to say of some, "even weeping, they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." In all their writings we find no weak indifference to error, no apology for infidels, but a constant asseveration of the truth, with warnings against those who pervert it. It is nothing to the purpose that bigots and persecutors feel that they are right and others wrong. This of itself, it is true, does not prove a man to be right; yet he cannot be right without this. For an essential feature of the gospel is, that it makes those who believe in it feel and teach that it is essential to salvation. If a man says to us, I preach the gospel, we must require of him this proof, that he believes his gospel to be essential to our salvation, and he must proceed to warn us, if we reject it. Christ and his apostles do this. A minister must warn and threaten me, or he does not preach the gospel contained in Scripture. If we do not feel and teach that our faith is essential to salvation, and do not, therefore, preach against false doctrine and false teachers, it is a sign that we have felt but little, if any, of the power of the gospel. If the

gospel which I preach be not essential to the salvation of others, it cannot save my soul. I am, then, a blind leader of the blind. If so, I may not perish alone. Some of my congregation may perish with me, and their blood will be required at my hand.

I turn from this train of thought to one more grateful to our feelings, and will close by alluding to the example of assured faith in the words of the text: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Here is assurance of historical and experimental faith. Assurance of experimental faith necessarily implies assurance respecting the truth of the gospel. Our occupation as ministers affords the best of opportunities for both of these; that is, to know the truth, and to enjoy its practical effects upon our own souls. A minister of the gospel ought to be a man of great faith, both as it regards his belief of the gospel, and his assurance of a personal interest in the Redeemer. If we feel the truth of one half the exhortations we address to others, we cannot fail to have assurance of faith in every sense of the word. Thus a Christian minister ought to be the happiest man on earth. He enjoys every means of knowing the truth, and of applying it to his own heart, and of profiting by the experience of others. His study, the sick-room, the house of mourning, the prayer-meeting, the pulpit, afford him the best advantages to be eminent in faith, and a partaker here in a large measure, of the glory which shall be revealed. If we believe all which we say to others, we, as ministers, of course expect to be exceedingly happy in heaven. We have had our minds and hearts cultivated, we are admitted to the very best society on earth, our thoughts and feelings are associated with things into which angels desire to look, we are laborers together with God, ministers of Christ, and "if we suffer, we shall also reign with him." A distinguished fellow-servant of ours once said, "If we only felt what joys are laid up for us in heaven, we should clap our hands and say, I am a minister of Christ! I am a minister of Christ!" Let us only put in exercise that faith which we prescribe to our fellow-Christians, and then we shall not wonder at the assured faith of that great believer, Hugo, which he once expressed in such words as these: "I eat secure, I drink secure, I sleep secure, as though I had passed the day of death, avoided the day of judgment, and escaped the torments of hell-

fire. I play and laugh as though I were already triumphing in the kingdom of God." If there be covenant transactions between us and Christ, such as are implied in the text, if we know whom we have believed, and are persuaded that he is able to keep that which we have committed unto him against that day, our hearts will respond as we hear Paul say, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice." Soon, as an early Christian once said, "we shall see that adorable head which was crowned with thorns for us." Soon, very soon, from those hands which were nailed to the tree for us, we shall receive that crown which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give us in that day, and not to us only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

The occasion admonishes me to say, If, from that fulness of joy you should look back upon a desolate companion and your fatherless children, bereaved not only of you, but of their former means of support, may your heart be comforted with the thought that you bestowed upon some like them, who were tasting the bitter cup of sorrow, a token of your sympathy this day.

May it be the peculiar happiness of those who have known each other here as ministers, in joys and sorrows, in counsel or in controversy, to meet in heaven. Some will be there whom we may not expect to see, and some will fail whose absence will astonish us. May we meet there our beloved and venerable friend, whose presence and voice we miss to-day,* but who will always be pleasantly associated in our minds with this Convention. His face is a benediction; must it be changed into an admonition? That "reverend head must lie as low as ours." It constrains us each to ask himself, Am I a Christian? I am a minister of Christ. I was, or should have been, a Christian before I was a minister; and when at death I cease to be a minister, the great question with me will be, Am I a Christian? Do I know what the gospel is from my own experience? Have I committed my soul to Christ, and is he keeping that precious trust for me against that day? Then "take heed to thyself and to thy doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." Amen.

* Rev. John Pierce, D. D., of Brookline, confined at home, as it is feared, with his last illness.

JOHN FOSTER'S LETTER.

A LETTER OF THE CELEBRATED JOHN FOSTER TO A YOUNG MINISTER, ON THE DURATION OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT: with an Introduction and Notes, consisting chiefly of Extracts from Orthodox Writers, and an Earnest Appeal to the American Tract Society in regard to the Character of its Publications. Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Company. 1849. Pp. 119.

THIS pamphlet is anonymous, and we have no knowledge of its authorship; we can speak of it, therefore, with the more freedom. It commences with an explanatory statement copied from Ryland's Life of John Foster, respecting the celebrated letter of Mr. Foster on the subject of future punishment, and is followed by eight pages of extracts from Orthodox reviewers, and others, testifying to the general soundness of Mr. Foster's religious opinions, his great talents, the deliberateness and fixedness of his views with regard to future punishment, his consistent piety notwithstanding his opinions on this subject of future punishment, and his continued good standing in the ministry and Christian Church to the close of his life.

Then follows the Letter of Mr. Foster, which it was supposed would have the more weight with the reader by means of the preceding testimonials to his ability and piety; and also with the managers of the American Tract Society, whose names are printed at the head of the letter which closes the pamphlet, and which is intended as a remonstrance against some of their publications, such as the works of Baxter, Alleine, Saurin, and the authoress of the Peep of Day. In one place the author quotes from these works several hundred expressions on the subject of future punishment, arranging them in alphabetical order, and making an appalling show of terms and expressions on the subject of future punishment.

The whole design and plan of the book may be stated in these words: The Rev. John Foster thought that endless punishment does violence to our instinctive feelings. Hence the American Tract Society should suppress those expressions in their books; or reject the books themselves, which convey, in such appalling forms, the idea that the future punishment of the wicked is to be fearfully severe, and without end.

Many things are said in connection with this main design and argument which it is not important to notice. The great stress of the writer is laid on this, that Mr. Foster could not bring his feelings to admit the endlessness of future punishment. Our chief design in noticing the pamphlet before us will be answered by examining the letter of Mr. Foster.

Many of our readers have read this celebrated letter. To those who have not read it, and indeed to those who have, the following epitome may not be unacceptable.

A young minister, the Rev. E. White, of Hereford, England, wrote to Mr. Foster for his views on the duration of future punishment. Mr. Foster replied, (Sept. 24, 1841,) saying, (and the remark should be borne in mind,) that he had made much less research into what had been written on this subject, than his young friend seemed to have done, and perhaps had been "too content to let an opinion or impression admitted in early life, dispense with protracted inquiry and various reading." P. 13. "The general, not very far short of universal, judgment of divines in affirmation of the doctrine of eternal punishment must be acknowledged a weighty consideration. It is a very fair question, Is it likely that so many thousands of able, learned, benevolent and pious men, should all have been in error? And the language of Scripture is formidably strong; so strong, that it must be an argument of extreme cogency that would authorize a limited interpretation." P. 13. Nevertheless, he declares himself not convinced of the doctrine by these considerations, and the reason is, that in his view, "the stupendous idea of eternity," (P. 14,) is a sufficient answer to all direct proofs on the subject.

He then proceeds to expatiate on the idea of eternity. In grand and awful forms of thought he illustrates this "stupendous idea" of never-ending existence; he carries us along the trackless wastes of futurity till we are bewildered, and we cease to feel the addition of other millions of ages to the already inconceivable extent, and billions, trillions, quadrillions of centuries make no more impression on us than tens or units. He then calls upon us to conceive of a human soul subjected to a state of suffering for such a period, which, however, compared with the duration yet to come, is not so much as a drop to the sea.

Dividing the ages, so to speak, of eternal punishment, by the sins of thought, word and deed, committed by each transgressor

during the period of human life, he represents the sinner as enduring an incalculable period of suffering for each transgression. At this his mind revolts. He cannot feel that this is just. It is disproportioned and excessive ; no arguments, no words of Scripture, however "formidably strong," can satisfy him that God will punish any man forever, for the sins committed in this brief space of his existence.

Much of his reasoning on the subject will be answered when we speak to some of the points embraced in the foregoing general representation. The grand idea of the letter is this: Eternity is too long for the duration of future punishment.

This is a subject in which all are equally interested ; and therefore, in writing upon it, we cannot but feel impressed with its personal relation to ourselves. Of all the themes of religion, surely no one is more fitted to chasten the feelings of religious controversy, and to excite feelings of deep interest in our fellow men. The doubts and difficulties of serious minds with regard to this subject, only serve to awaken our affectionate regard for them, with a desire that, if this doctrine be true, we may all "escape these things, and stand before the Son of man."

In remarking upon Foster's objection to the eternity of future punishment, we will present our thoughts in numerical order for the sake of method and clearness.

I. The existence of a belief in endless punishment in the minds of so many of the best of men is a presumptive argument that it is true.

Superstition cannot account for the continued existence of this belief, even if it had its origin in superstition. No one will think of charging the body of evangelical believers who hold this doctrine, with superstition.

The doctrine is not maintained through interested and selfish considerations. The believers in the doctrine have nothing to gain by proving it to be true. It does not make them richer, nor more honorable, nor add to their worldly ease. The contrary of all this is true. Its tendency rather is to abate the inordinate desire and pursuit of wealth, honor, and pleasure,—the Saviour's question, constantly occurring to the mind of the sincere believer, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?"

Neither is the doctrine suggested or maintained by severe, inhuman feeling. He who seeks to prove this doctrine true, knows that its truth involves myriads of his fellow creatures in everlasting woe. If he succeeds to establish the doctrine, he shuts the door of hope upon many; though were we to say, instead of many, one immortal spirit, we should suggest a sufficient reason for caution and reluctance in establishing the truth of this doctrine. Nevertheless, the doctrine is believed and maintained by the most amiable and benevolent of the human race.

There are strong personal considerations which constitute very powerful objections to it in the minds of those, who, nevertheless, believe it. They see that it bears with as great force against them as against others. Except they repent, they will all likewise perish. If they draw back from Christ, they may draw back to perdition. Besides this, and perhaps it is the more powerful consideration, almost every believer in this doctrine has at some time a relative or friend whose religious condition at death excites fearful thoughts, and clothes his grave with more than midnight darkness. The very strongest temptations have been presented to believers in this doctrine, to find or create insuperable objections to it; yet the vast majority of Christian believers, who have lost friends concerning whose condition they entertain no hope, remain firmly persuaded that the doctrine is true. Now to such men, "the idea of eternity" is as "stupendous" as it was to Mr. Foster; the assignment of ages on ages of woe for each transgression, conflicted with their ideas of justice as it did with his; in short, all the objections to the endless duration of future punishment have occurred to multitudes of intelligent, wise, pious men in days and months of tribulation and mourning at the loss of unconverted friends; but they have adhered to their belief, and we are disposed to ask why their assent to it under such peculiar circumstances should not weigh as much as Mr. Foster's dissent from it? He had no penetration which they have not possessed; he also was formed out of the clay; he could present no claim to have his feelings of repugnance regarded as paramount to the feelings of submission and confident belief with which his Christian brethren in the hours of their sorrow have deliberately declared their faith in this doctrine.

If the doctrine of endless punishment be not taught in Scripture, who invented it? and how has it maintained its hold upon

the human mind through successive periods of time? It is true that many evangelical believers, especially in England, at the present day, declare, with Mr. Foster, that they are not satisfied to receive the doctrine; these, however, are dissentients from the commonly received belief of evangelical Christendom. Were the doctrine unscriptural, we should rather expect to find the believers in it a minority, remonstrated with by their Christian brethren, and avoided as a class of men of harsh views and feelings, gloomy in their faith and perverters of Scripture. On the contrary, the believers in the doctrine remonstrate, while the unbelievers are in a measure reserved and silent, and the wisest of them do not venture positive assertions on the subject, but state their difficulties, and declare that they cannot accept the common faith. Enough has been said on the subject to make good and intelligent men re-examine the foundations of their belief on this point; but the result is a deep and firm conviction that the literal representations of the Bible are to be received in all the fulness and strength of their obvious import.

They who reject the doctrine of endless punishment have a formidable task in setting aside, we will not say the language of Scripture, but, the argument drawn from the commonly received belief on the subject. It cannot be accounted for, that evangelical believers should so generally admit and preach a doctrine which is repugnant to our natural feelings, unless it be found in Scripture.

II. Mr. Foster furnishes a sufficient refutation of his own objections to the doctrine of endless punishment, in his published views of the present constitution of things in this world.

In the pamphlet before us, the compiler has inserted a letter from Mr. Foster to Dr. Harris, which we think explains the origin of Mr. F.'s views with regard to future punishment, and makes us feel that a morbid state of mind was the occasion of his doctrinal error. We venture to say that if Mr. Foster, with the state of mind in which he wrote his letter on future punishment, had been an inhabitant of another planet, and had been told of our world, with its enormous woes, its disappointed hopes, its scenes of heart-rending anguish, its oppressions and cruelties, the triumph of vice over virtue, and the inconceivable amount of human degradation in heathen and pagan lands, he would have said, It is a libel on the character of God to suppose that such

a state of things can exist under his government. The following extract from his letter to Dr. Harris we think will confirm our remark :

"To me it appears a most mysteriously awful economy, overspread by a lurid and dreadful shade. I pray for the piety to maintain an humble submission of thought and feeling to the wise and righteous Disposer of all existence. But to see a nature created in purity, qualified for perfect and endless felicity, but ruined at the very origin, by a disaster devolving fatally on all the race, — to see it in an early age of the world estranged from truth, from the love and fear of its Creator, from that, therefore, without which existence is a thing to be deplored, — abandoned to all evil, till swept away by a deluge, — the renovated race revolving into idolatry and iniquity, and spreading downward through ages in darkness, wickedness, and misery, — no Divine dispensation to enlighten and reclaim it, except for one small section, and that section itself a no less flagrant proof of the desperate corruption of the nature, — the ultimate, grand remedial visitation, Christianity, laboring in a difficult progress and very limited extension, and soon perverted from its purpose into darkness and superstition, for a period of a thousand years, — at the present hour known and even nominally acknowledged by very greatly the minority of the race, the mighty mass remaining prostrate under the infernal dominion, of which countless generations of their ancestors have been the slaves and victims, — a deplorable majority of the people in the Christian nations strangers to the vital power of Christianity, and a larger proportion directly hostile to it, and even the institutions pretended to be for its support and promotion being baneful to its virtue, — its progress in the work of conversion, in even the most favored part of the world, *distanced* by the progressive increase of the population, so that, even there, (but to a fearful extent if we take the world at large,) the disproportion of the faithful to the irreligious is continually increasing, — the sum of all these melancholy facts being, that thousands of millions have passed, and thousands every day are passing, out of the world, in no state of fitness for a pure and happy state elsewhere, — O, it is a most confounding and appalling contemplation !" Pp. 38, 39.

We say, it is not improbable that the state of mind, or the habit indicated by these lines, of viewing events and things, would have led Mr. Foster to reject the historical assertion of the existence of this moral economy, were he not an eye-witness of it, just as he did, for similar reasons, or rather with similar feelings, reject the doctrine of endless punishment. We feel that the impressions of such a man are not a safe guide. He excites distrust and fear in our minds with regard to the government of the world ; we should not feel happy in the thought that God reigns, nor see how the multitude of isles could be glad thereof, should we live

habitually under the influence of such views as those which he expresses in his letter to Dr. Harris. Mr. Foster's views of this world and its awful calamities are not modified, nor his difficulties solved by any representations which a Christian, we should think, would naturally make with regard to the evil of sin. The way in which we are accustomed to hear good men speak of the disorder of the present system is, to illustrate the nature and consequences of sin by referring to the calamities and sufferings of the world. They represent that as redemption is declared in the Bible to have for its object the instruction of the universe; so this planet, cursed with sin, and groaning under its effects, will forever serve to shew the inhabitants of other worlds what sin is, and what it can do; so that however terrible and inconceivably dreadful are the consequences of sin, they will nevertheless be for the happiness of the universe, by keeping other orders of beings in their allegiance to God. It is easy, of course, to step from this position into a boundless deep of speculation and mystery with regard to the origin of evil. But without venturing into speculation, it is sufficiently obvious that the government of the universe being a moral government, that is, a government administered by means of moral considerations instead of force, such considerations must be prepared to influence moral beings as will be eminently fitted to the great end of preserving and governing them in a state of rectitude. If God sees fit to employ the fall and the consequent sufferings of our race in this world for this purpose, who shall say that He is not wise and good in so doing, notwithstanding all that we suffer; especially when we consider that as we are constituted, our very sufferings are the means of a greater knowledge of God, and greater moral excellence and happiness to all who love and obey Him?

If this view of the present system be correct, and is sufficient to vindicate the ways of God to man, we may argue that when we know as much about a future state as we do about this, we shall doubtless see reason to say with the redeemed: "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints."

III. We shall now state several objections to Mr. Foster's reasoning with regard to future punishment.

We nowhere find in his treatment of the subject, a deep, penetrating, Scriptural view of the evil of sin, such, for example, as we find in the writings of President Edwards; and which, after

all, is the true balance to keep the mind at equipoise on this tremendous subject of future punishment. Foster seems to commiserate man as an unfortunate creature, subject to a destiny over which he has no control, by which his birth and education are appointed under circumstances which greatly extenuate sin, insomuch that he cannot possibly be the subject of guilt sufficient to merit endless punishment. This is evidently begging the whole question. We must not consult our pre-conceived notions with regard to the evil and the just desert of sin. The great God only has a right to say what punishment he will inflict; and we must submit our views and feelings to this revelation of his will.

We all believe that "by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners," and that too by his one act of disobedience. If the consequences of that one act have been so direful, as all confess, we must conclude that sin is, in every sense, an infinite evil.

Mr. Foster's views and reasonings on this subject are also defective in this respect, that he does not bring to view the atonement, so as to illustrate the nature of sin by means of the propitiation required for its forgiveness.

Here we think, is the grand argument in favor of future endless punishment, in the minds of those who receive the doctrine of a propitiation for sin. Of course they cannot use it in arguing with those who reject the doctrine of the atonement, but we speak of it as probably the principal anchor which holds them surely and steadfastly to this belief of endless punishment. Believing that the Word, who was in the beginning with God and was God, was made flesh, and that an infinite sacrifice was made for sin by the divine and human Redeemer, they cannot believe that sin, which required an infinite sacrifice, subjects the sinner to any thing less than a punishment infinite in duration. God has made a manifestation of his views and feelings with regard to sin by the sacrifice which he has made for sinners; they who accept this sacrifice commonly feel and believe that if sin were not threatened with endless punishment, such a sacrifice would not have been made. It does not seem, so to speak, to be an economical arrangement that such humiliation and sufferings as those of Christ should have taken place, except upon an infinite necessity. It would have done less violence to our feelings that sinners should have made their own atonement, could they have made it; and that however protracted their sufferings might be, so long as they were

deserved, it would have been more suitable that they should have suffered, than that the resources of the Godhead should be drawn upon to furnish a substitute for that which was, at the farthest, a limited evil, to be followed, after the longest infliction of pain, with an eternity of joy. To take a case for illustration: If Judas is to suffer to a limited extent, and after millions of ages is to be restored to happiness, it would not be said of him: "Good were it for that man if he had never been born." Such an atonement as we believe Christ to have made, does not seem demanded by the exigencies of the case, if Judas can himself atone for his sins. It is only on the supposition that sin cannot be atoned for by the sufferings of the sinner, that we feel that the atonement revealed in Scripture is justifiable. This is the received belief of those who accept the doctrine of endless punishment.

One of Mr. Foster's objections to the doctrine of endless punishment, is expressed in these words.

"There is, or may be, in it what would be of mighty force to deter him, if *he could have a competent notion of it*; but his necessary ignorance precludes from him that salutary force. Is he not thus taken at a fearful disadvantage? As a motive to deter him, the threatened penalty can only be in the proportion to his (in the present case) narrow faculty of apprehending it; but, as an evil to be suffered, it surpasses in magnitude every intellect but the Omniscient. Might we not imagine the reflection of one of the condemned delinquents, suffering on, and still interminably on, through a thousand or a million of ages, to be expressed in some such manner as this? — 'O, if it had been possible for me to conceive but the most diminutive part of the weight and horror of this doom, every temptation to sin would have been enough to strike me dead with terror; I should have shrunk from it with the most violent recoil.' " P. 19.

Now may not the same argument be applied in reasoning against capital punishment, for example, or imprisonment for life? On the scaffold the culprit might say, "O, if it had been possible for me to conceive but the most diminutive part of the weight and horror of this doom," I never should have taken the life of my victim. "I should have shrunk from" the indulgence of my passions "with the most violent recoil."

Let any one read those affecting pages, the "Last days of the condemned," or imagine the feelings of a man in that solitary confinement to which convicts sentenced to prison for life, as well as others, are at first, for a few days, subjected; and he will see

in the thoughts and feelings of the condemned, precisely the train of reasoning here suggested by Mr. Foster. Take the man imprisoned for life as a manslayer. I committed my crime, he says, from beginning to end, within the space of twenty minutes. I am thirty years of age, and may live within the prison walls forty years. Thus, for each of the twenty minutes which the commission of my crime occupied, I must suffer, according to arithmetical calculation, seven hundred and thirty days. And indeed the less time occupied by the crime, the greater the punishment per minute, in the case of one imprisoned for life. "Had it been possible for me," he may say, in the language of Mr. Foster, "to conceive but the most diminutive part of this ignominy, privation, pain, I should have shrunk from it with the most violent recoil."

Precisely the same mode of reasoning against endless punishment, as being inoperative on account of its inconceivableness, may be employed to shew that the character of God can have no proper influence as a motive to deter from sin. For a sinner in the presence of the Almighty, face to face, might say, Could I have conceived but the most diminutive part of what God is, I never would have sinned against Him. The reply would be, that the invisible things of Him may be clearly seen, being understood from the things that are made; and that, therefore, the sinner was without excuse? In the same way it might be demanded of one in endless misery, who should plead that he had never fully conceived of such a punishment, whether any thing could convey to the human mind a truth more impressively than the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew expresses the truths of eternal judgment, and endless retributions? If the power of fully conceiving the truths of revelation be the standard of justice and of truth, then the feeble capacities of human nature are the limit of truth and justice; and further, there must be as many standards of truth as there are differences of capacity among men.

Had we room, we would copy Mr. Foster's graphic description of future, endless woe, and his inference from it, namely, that nothing can warrant such suffering; and then we would present, in connection with it, a view of the increased happiness of the vast universe as the fruit of God's manifested displeasure against sin. We may suppose it not impossible in the moral universe, that vastly greater safety and consequent happiness will accrue

in consequence of the endless punishment of some sinners. It is not to be supposed that the effect of punishing sinners forever ceases at the day of judgment. It may be, that, as long as they suffer, they will contribute to the permanence and extension of happiness in the universe; and when we borrow the light which astronomy affords, and suppose that myriads of systems, with a population which no conceivable numbers can compute, may be kept in allegiance to God by knowing what sin is in its nature and consequences, through the example furnished by the transgression and punishment of some of our race; and if we add to this, that not one soul will perish except for his voluntary sin, and will eat only of the fruit of his doings, surely we cannot say that endless future punishment is theoretically unreasonable. Especially if we add that, continuing to sin, the wicked will be deservedly punished so long as they sin.

But this implies that God will forever behold sin and suffering in his dominions; that there will be a place which will be a blot on his empire, and it is asked, Will a benevolent and almighty Being permit such a blot to remain upon his government?

This mode of reasoning takes it for granted that God cannot look on suffering forever. For more than six thousand years he has looked upon it, in forms which terrify the mind of man. It is by no means obvious that God will not look on suffering forever. How long it was before man fell, that the sinning angels descended to their prison, we are not informed; but it is altogether an assumption, which admits of no proof, that God cannot forever look on pain. All reasoning based on his paternal relation to his creatures fails, because many events happen to the children of men which an earthly father never would inflict. No sane man would set fire to his child's house, and consume him, and his wife and children; nor sink hundreds of his children and grandchildren in the deep; nor scatter a pestilence in the houses of his descendants.

Besides, it is a gratuitous assumption that the everlasting suffering of sinners will be a blast on the government of God. The penitentiary at Philadelphia is no blot on the government of Pennsylvania, nor the State Prison at Charlestown on this Commonwealth. There is reason to infer, from certain passages of Scripture, that the endless punishment of sinners, and especially of Satan and his angels, (and none from this world will, of course, perish who do not deserve it as really as they,) will infuse confi-

dence and strength into holy beings. Vast interests are at stake in a moral universe, and it may be that a great expenditure of vindictive punishment may be necessary to maintain those interests. The question would be, Is it for the best that there should be a moral universe? That question is settled, and now the only remaining question is, What measures are necessary to maintain this moral universe in its allegiance and happiness? We love to think of such a mind as that of Mr. Foster in the clear light of eternity rejoicing in that which once he saw, if at all, through a glass darkly, and joining with saints and angels in their "Alleluia, just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." In this world Mr. Foster could look no further into the heavens without a telescope, than any clown. What matters it how Mr. Foster *felt* about future punishment? We have already said, Others have felt differently; and we could gather as powerful and as numerous testimonies to the talents and piety of many who fully believed in endless punishment, as the author of this pamphlet has collected in favor of Mr. Foster. All this proves nothing. "To the law and the testimony." "Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherewith is he to be accounted of?"

Mr. Foster dwells at much length and with much force, on this objection to the endless duration of future punishment, that it "sits so easy on the minds of the religious and benevolent believers of it." P. 25. "If the tremendous doctrine be true, it ought to be continually proclaimed as with the blast of a trumpet, inculcated and reiterated, with ardent passion, in every possible form of illustration; no remission of the alarm to the thoughtless spirits." "The most prolonged thundering alarm is but as the note of an infant, a bird, or an insect, in proportion to the horrible urgency of the case." P. 27.

In such remarks there is not a just consideration of the principles of the human mind as susceptible to moral suasion. In waking a sleeper from a burning dwelling, we may adopt measures to rouse and save him which would only disgust the sinner if applied to his moral sensibilities. Clamor and cries of distress, tones of sorrow inarticulate through excessive grief, a countenance on which unutterable concern for the perishing should always be depicted, would fail of their benevolent intention, if employed Sabbath after Sabbath, and from day to day, by preachers of the gospel to save men. Christ and his Apostles were plain and

bold in their warnings; but they understood human nature too well to scream their admonitions, or to use the intonations of the affrighted.

We are all aware that scenes of indescribable wrong and misery exist in this city, and perhaps not far from our dwellings. Yet this knowledge does not keep us agitated and weeping. Human nature could not endure it. Our various duties would forbid it. We would ask, Whether Mr. Foster himself warned sinners as much as he should have done, against even limited future punishment?

No minister of Christ who believes in the endless punishment of sin, will fail to confess with shame and sorrow, that he feels the power of this awful truth so feebly; and that it influences his feelings in so small a measure. But he will make the same complaint with regard to his conceptions of the Saviour's love, of the evil of sin, and the blessedness of heaven.

But if we are correctly informed by the author of the pamphlet before us, there are some good and great men who, in his view, have been sufficiently faithful, on this point, and we presume that their faithfulness would satisfy even Mr. Foster. Here is another instance in which this pamphlet furnishes a reply to itself. The writings of Baxter, Alleine, Saurin, President Edwards, the authoress of the *Peep of Day* abound so excessively in representations of endless torments, that our compiler sees fit to stigmatize them with what he calls in somewhat vulgar taste, a "Hellomania." He has gathered two pages (71-73) in small type, of terms relating to future woe, from the publications of the American Tract Society, arranging them with much care, in alphabetical order, thus,—"A—C." "The abyss," "burnings," "cup of misery," etc., "D, E." "The damned," "damnation," etc., down to "S, T;" and then he says: "But methinks, I hear you cry, Hold! enough, although several letters of the alphabet still remain." P. 73. We are surely satisfied, if he is; though we needed no proof that Baxter and Alleine understood the terrors of the Lord. If Mr. Foster were living, these two pages of extracts from the books of our beloved American Tract Society would, perhaps, induce him to admit that some men have cleared their skirts of the blood of souls; and that the Tract Society is doing the same, and affording all of us the opportunity to warn our fellow-men with no uncertain sounds. We would, however, respectfully suggest to the compiler of this pamphlet, whether

there is a congruity in his italicizing those parts of Mr. Foster's letter which complain that the doctrine "*sits so easy*" on the minds of its believers, at the same time that he remonstrates with the American Tract Society because of the awful and superabounding terms in which they cry in the ears of men to save them from eternal damnation? *

With regard to that long array of awful terms, we feel that it is not too long in view of the awful nature of the subject. Some of them, like expressions on every other subject in the writings of men a few centuries ago, are quaint; and some of them are almost queer, and provoke a feeling bordering on the ludicrous, when disconnected from the sentences where they occur. But they were not conceived nor penned except with tears, and every considerate reader will make due allowance for their antiquated character. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that many, if any, of those terms, are of mere human origin. They may almost all be traced to the Scriptures; or at least, the themes of them, as the etymologists say, may be found in the Bible. We could print two pages of terms from the Bible on the subject of future woe, which would seem as formidable as these quotations from the Tract Society; and of which, it may be said, as a man once said to a lady who would probably have sympathized with the compiler of this pamphlet in his dislike of some things in Baxter and others: "One word of damnation in the Bible counts more than a hundred of Baxter's."

* This is not the last inconsistency in this book. The writer affects to be scandalized at the titles of certain books containing the name of God, as being of irreverent tendency. But next he speaks of some anecdotes in one of the Society's books; and allows himself to say, (the italics are his,) "I must acknowledge that the change of *climate* in passing from the writings of Alleine, and Baxter, and Pike, to those of" this book, "is quite agreeable." — "May it not be that the Publishing Committee — in adopting this work — are converts to that *theory of alternate emotions* which some revival preachers have practised upon, and which justifies in the view of critics the strange contrasts of successive scenes in some of the plays of Shakspeare!" This trifling with the most awful theme of hell torments, gains little credit for him in his scrupulosity as to other things. He is capable of that low vulgar talk which characterizes "Universalism," so called. Witness such expressions, italicised, as these: "desperate *hell-ucination*;" — "A fair example of this lady's *hell-omania*," and his seventeen pages of unmanly strictures, on this same authoress of the "Peep of Day," notwithstanding his own gallant anger at an allusion, in one of the Society's books, to the "Lowell Offering."

The compiler of this pamphlet, after quoting some terrible expressions from Pike's "*Persuasives to Early Piety*," remarks upon the word "*Persuasives*," as an incongruous title for a book which deals so much in the language of endless retributions. Pike might refer the objector to Paul, who said, "Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men."

There are some minor points in this pamphlet, which we had proposed to notice, but have no room. Indeed the pamphlet is sufficiently answered, if we have succeeded in our attempt to answer Mr. Foster's objection to future endless punishment. The appeal must be to revelation. Revelation impresses the great majority of pious believers with the belief that future punishment is to be without end. We prefer to receive the literal representations of Scripture. Doing so, at all events we are safe; which may not be said of those who reject the doctrines of grace with their sanctions. We are sure, however, that "everlasting punishment" is as clearly revealed in Scripture as "life eternal."

We will add but one remark. The objections which Foster and others make to the doctrine of endless punishment, and the terror with which it impresses every mind, is to us one presumptive proof that it is true. A threatened punishment, which is to have a limit, would, we believe, have very little influence. Even the belief of eternal woe fails to deter multitudes from sin. We should say beforehand, that if God will utter a threatening against sin, it must be one which will smite the human mind with terror and amazement; and not one concerning which a sinner would feel that he may find some method either of escaping or enduring it, after which it will be good for him that he had been born. The doctrine of eternal punishment is the great working doctrine of evangelical religion. Many of us would immediately cease to preach, if we did not believe it. This alone makes ministers contented to live on incompetent means of support, and to spend life in the employment, not in itself to be desired, of admonishing, reproof, warning, and beseeching their fellow-men. We feel that Christ and the Apostles did this. We feel that we are making the last offers of salvation to men. We believe that we preach none other things than prophets and apostles testified, saying, that "there shall be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust;" and that some shall awake "to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

HARVARD COLLEGE CHARTER.

A VERY important stage in the history of this Institution has just been reached. It appears that a joint committee was appointed from the two branches of the Legislature, in February last, on an order to "consider the powers of the Legislature, under the constitution, in regard to the government of Harvard University ; and whether, within the limits of those powers, any legislation is necessary to render that institution more beneficial to all the people of the Commonwealth."

This committee presented their report just at the close of the session, too late for action. But it is of great consequence that the people of the Commonwealth should know the facts it sets forth ; for, it consists mainly of facts from authentic documents. The importance of this report consists in its full defence of a principle which must change the ground of controversy between the Unitarian defenders of the exclusive and sectarian government of that institution, and those who call for a more just and liberal administration.

Many, who have quietly submitted to the unfair policy which keeps the college permanently under the control of a religious sect, which is but a fraction of the Commonwealth, will now begin to inquire ; and inquiry will be followed by action. They have submitted to it under a belief which is altogether without foundation. Who originated, and who has perpetuated this impression, need not now be discussed. It has certainly been widely believed in this Commonwealth, that the government of the University was entirely out of the reach of the people, at least, so far as the Corporation is concerned. But it seems manifest from evidence here adduced, that the Legislature possesses ample power to make such changes in either of the branches of the college government, as will greatly abridge, if not destroy, any sectarian monopoly of influence in this venerable institution. The people's remedy is in the Legislature.

The first proof on this subject is the provision, (in Chap. v. Sec. i.,) of the Constitution of Massachusetts, as established in 1780, which is in these words : *Provided*, that nothing herein shall be construed to prevent the Legislature of this Commonwealth from making such alterations in the government of the said University

as shall be conducive to its advantage, and the interest of the republic of letters, in as full a manner as might have been done by the Legislature of the late Province of the Massachusetts Bay."

Then the question arises; what alterations in the government of the College were made by the Legislature previous to 1780? A few of their many citations will determine that point.

1640. The General Court appointed Henry Dunster to be President of the College.

1650. They granted the Charter to a corporation of seven, with power, "by the presence and consent of the overseers," to choose their successors.

1673. They made an addition to the corporation.

1694. They granted the College a new charter, increasing the number of corporators to ten; naming them; and dispensing with the Board of Overseers altogether.

1697. They again changed its government.

1699. They changed it again.

1701. They superseded President Mather, substituting Mr. Willard.

1707. The provincial legislature revised and reestablished the charter of 1650.

These instances are sufficient to shew that the constitution of the Commonwealth now recognizes in the legislature, power to alter the number of fellows and overseers; and to secure such appointments as may be just and satisfactory to the people, and will best promote the interests of the whole Commonwealth.

The second source of proof is the action of the Legislature since the adoption of the Constitution in 1780; for that is the only legitimate interpretation of the proviso above quoted, in the act of 1780, which confirmed the Corporation in their rights and properties.

In 1810, the Legislature altered the Board of Overseers, and the College accepted the new law.

In 1812, they reversed this decision. The Corporation and Overseers obeyed the new law, under a protest, reserving their right to test the validity of the legislative act, by a judicial decision, which they have never seen fit to do.

In 1814, the Legislature restored the Board of Overseers formed in 1810, with additions; and in this form, it has existed to the present time.

In the absence of judicial decision, this legislative action must be the proper interpreter of the charter. And it determines that the General Court has the power to change the government of the College, as to its form and the manner of electing its incumbents, if it may see proper. At present they leave thirty of the eighty-three overseers to be elected by the Board of Overseers.

But the inherent power of altering the government of the College is in the Legislature. We have then this question to propose for the consideration of the people of this Commonwealth. Why is Harvard College, the favorite institution of the State, perpetually controlled by one religious sect? Not because there is any inherent justice in such a state of things; not because that sect is very large, it probably embracing not more than one tenth of the population of the Commonwealth; not because there are not gentlemen in the several denominations of equal ability with the seven incumbents of the office of President and Fellows,—by which we mean no disparagement of these respectable gentlemen; and not because it is the will of the people that it should be so.

The principal reason is, that no obvious method has heretofore been perceived by which this monopoly could be abated.

It is now perfectly clear, that unless that report can be proved to be either a false citation of documents, or a partial statement of facts vital to this question, the Legislature has power to produce, (in one session,) those changes which justice and the interests of the community require. And that the report is reliable in regard to its fairness and its fulness, we have abundant guarantees in the names of such gentlemen as Mr. Boutwell of Groton, Rev. Mr. Upham, of Salem, Mr. Kellogg, of Pittsfield, Mr. Stowe, of Springfield, Mr. Allen, of Shrewsbury, and Messrs. Giles and Bullock from the Senate.

If it be asked, What can the Legislature do? we answer, that it can do what it has done. It is undoubtedly the founder, and proper guardian of the institution, and has the ultimate power of control over it. If it cannot annul the charter of 1650, it can certainly modify it. This it has repeatedly done. The charter in question, though given to the President and Fellows, recognizes the Board of Overseers, as established in 1642, in a way that makes the existence of that Board essential to the validity of the charter. This Board consisted, at the time the charter was given, of the governor, the deputy governor, the magistrates, and the

teaching elders of Cambridge, Watertown, Charlestown, Boston, Roxbury, and Dorchester. Had this Board remained unchanged to the present time, its permanent members would be the Orthodox Congregational ministers of the six towns above mentioned. This is doubtless the supervision which the original founders of the College intended it should ever have. It came into the hands of the Unitarians, through that great defection from evangelical principles which took place in the colony, chiefly during the last part of the last century, in consequence of which Arminian, and then Unitarian, clergymen, came to be the incumbents of the old Puritan pulpits in the six towns. Still, if the Legislature had made no changes in the Board, it would now comprehend in its permanent branch, all the Orthodox, as well as Unitarian, clergymen in the towns in question. But the Legislature has repeatedly modified the constitution of that Board, so that now the permanent part of it is entirely elective, and the other portion is increased to many times its original number. We see not why the Legislature has not just as much power to make changes in the Corporation, as it has in the Board of Overseers. If it should see fit to grant a new charter, increasing the number of corporators and naming them, this would be no more than was done under the Provincial government. The Legislature has an unquestionable right to make such a change in the Corporation, as to secure to all interests a just representation. Would it not be well for them at their next session to call for the history of the elections by the Fellows and Overseers, for the past forty years? And when it shall appear that one sect has been favored without any satisfactory reason, what is there to hinder the Legislature from so limiting the action of the President and Fellows, that they shall no longer be able to perpetuate this abuse. In the present condition of things, we think that even the *wishes* of the Commonwealth, distinctly expressed by its Legislature, would be respected. If not, there can be no question that there are ways by which the Legislature can make those wishes respected.

Something must be done to redress the people's grievance. The election of a professor here, and a professor there, from the other denominations, especially while all but Unitarians are excluded from the Corporation and from the College faculty, (unless we except, occasionally, a tutor employed for a year or two,) does not touch the vital part of this evil. It is the govern-

ment, the self-perpetuating body, which is now, and for nearly half a century has been, almost exclusively Unitarian, which calls forth complaint. The College is not, and has not been for a long time, practically, the people's College. It is the College of a sect.

We have looked on with grief to see that noble Institution so separating itself from the sympathies of nine-tenths of the people of the State, to whom it as really belongs, as to the other tenth. We have heard the plea set up, that the Unitarians have given the most money. This argument assumes that they bought out the people's rights over their heads. If they wished an exclusive control, why did they not take their wealth, and found a Unitarian College with it; which they might have held with a clear conscience? Why do they ask the whole State to patronize a most sectarian college as a State college?

We have nothing to say of the Hollis professorship, for the present. It is comparatively a minor point. We can readily believe that they would now choose a man rather acceptable to the other sects, to fill that office; or, better still for them, forfeit the foundation to the State, or throw it into the sea, where it would trouble neither their consciences nor their counsels.

But there is a still weaker spot in their line of defence. Harvard College, founded originally by the Orthodox Congregationalists, and dedicated to Christ and the Church, is, and ever has been, the property of the State. But practically it is not now, as it was formerly, the college of the State. It has been monopolized by a single sect; — a sect too, decidedly at variance with the original founders of the college, on almost all the leading principles of the gospel which were held sacred by them.

Without imputing more blame to the present members of the Corporation, than might be incurred by any other seven men, all of one sect, we insist that this exclusive control is an intolerable grievance. We have no wish to disturb the tranquil seats of learning. They ought to be kept as far as possible from the strifes of party and the struggles of the lobby. But there are circumstances in which forbearance is no longer a virtue. Justice must be done to the Commonwealth; or the Commonwealth will right itself, and that very soon. As certain as the American slave system is doomed to fall, so certain will this unjust monopoly of influence in this institution cease. The former result may be delayed for a time, but the hour of the latter is at hand.

HOPE.

READER, have you "a good hope through grace;" a distinct and cheerful hope that your death will be the beginning of life? Some beloved members of your family may now be absent from you. You have a very definite and delightful expectation of meeting them shortly under your own roof. Do you as definitely and joyfully expect to meet your glorified Redeemer in heaven, and to associate forever with Moses and Paul, and to be the companion of holy angels?

It is wonderful that the human mind can, in any instance, content itself with either vague conceptions or faint expectations of an entrance into the heavenly state. For that will be more to us than the glory of empire is to the ambitious; more than the riches and pleasures of the most prosperous earthly condition; more than the most refined delights of society, or of intellectual activity. It is more worthy of intense emotion, eager pursuit, longing desire, and enraptured hope, than all else that now enkindles the desires, or ever has drawn forth the affections, of men: as much more worthy, as the soul is superior to its tent of clay; man, to the clods of earth; the perfection of the soul in excellence, to the comfort of the body; the everlasting approbation of God, to the transient favor of man. We do not need demonstration on this subject, but exhortation. There is scarcely a human being who, on this point of religious truth, will not admit all that we have now affirmed. What we need is a stronger application of admitted truth to our own hearts.

Let us then turn aside from the more literary and doctrinal forms of thought, to treat this subject as its magnitude deserves, in a direct and practical manner, with serious desires to be made better by our meditations; and with fervent prayers to the Spirit of all grace, to elevate and quicken our sluggish and earthly minds.

Many are resting, as we have said, in vague and indefinite conceptions of the heavenly state. They cannot form any clear notion of what is desirable in it. The negative thought of escape from suffering, and the general idea of well-being, are perhaps the sum of many men's hopes; and they too, truly regenerated men. Now this does not arise from the want of sufficiently definite instructions in the Scriptures. They have said enough concerning heaven as a state and a place, to form the mind to the

most satisfactory contemplation of it. Before one has travelled in foreign lands, he has very inadequate notions of all he is about to see. And yet he knows enough to arouse the most intense longings for the "time of his departure" to come, that he may begin that new intellectual existence which he anticipates. And to this enthusiasm he has arrived by hearing, by reading, and by reflection. The same means rightly employed, will bring him to the same definite imagination of the eternal glory, and the same fervent longings for the heavenly Canaan. He cannot, perhaps, form an adequate conception of the separate state of the soul and body, nor of the kind of consciousness that will be inspired by the new body which the spirit shall hereafter inhabit. Yet there are abundant materials, out of which we may form a lively anticipation of that state. We need no positive notion of space or scenery for this purpose. It is enough to know, that whatever the most perfect atmosphere is to the lungs, whatever the most delicious temperature is to the frame, the most perfect music to the ear, the most beautiful combinations of form and color to the eye, all will be enjoyed by the new body and its inhabiting spirit. But this is not the life and blessedness of the place. These are higher in their nature. And we are even now capable of feeling the inspiration of that delight which they will hereafter impart. Now "we see through a glass" obscurely. Yet it is vision. Combine, for example, all we have ever enjoyed of the sense of reconciliation, communion, confidence, adoration, love towards God considered in the infinite greatness and goodness of His being, or in the person of Christ and the Comforter. Let that be purified, expanded, perfected; let the consciousness of a perfect personal excellence be tempered by a delightful recognition of our dependence on Christ, of our relations,—as beings created, sustained, and redeemed,—to the Almighty, all-beneficent Creator, and the kind Redeemer of our life. With all this consciousness of perfectness, will be possessed the feeling of security, as we cannot now know it. A new dispensation will have begun. It is no longer discipline, probation, chastisement, fear, and painful vigilance; but tranquil assurance that the need of them has ceased forever. With these shall be conjoined the perfectness of society, to bring continually into exercise that love, confidence, communion of mind and heart, which we have here experienced imperfectly; there they will be complete and unalloyed. Next to our best

seasons of communion with God, we enjoy nothing here so purely as communion with his people, the fellowship of saints. Repose there will not be periodical — as we understand from the declaration, “there shall be no night there;” and “they rest not, day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy;” — but deliverance from all that wearies, annoys, or distresses. Now we can say, as to every thing that disturbs us here, “there shall be no more pain in heaven.” We shall be active in thought, in enlarging our mental horizon and our intellectual treasures; active in the affections of our purified natures, and the exercise of our wills. But the body will be “a glorious spiritual body,” and know no weariness nor disease. Memory, in recalling our earthly history, will but enhance the sense of dependence and indebtedness; conscience there will have a peaceful office. Fear will have no more to do. No selfish interest will mar the intercourse of the redeemed, or for a moment sully the fair image of God in the spirit.

All these views are sustained by declarations of the Scriptures. And they are as definite, at least, as those anticipations of wealth, honor and pleasure, which so animate the world. The imagination may stretch its pinions, and soar to those heavenly heights; and at its utmost flight it will still be true, that we know but “in part.” God hath revealed much to us concerning the state of the blessed; and yet, it is true, that “it doth not appear what we shall be;” only “we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

If, then, we have experienced any degree of communion with God, and with his people, — if the exercise of penitence, love, faith, or gratitude has ever caused us any delight, then we know something of heaven; and we may definitely meditate upon it, until our hearts glow with sacred emotions.

Then it is obvious, that if any true Christian neglects the study of what God has revealed, or frequent meditation upon it, he must expect not to have a very “lively hope.” Faith is the mind’s eye and ear, for heavenly scenes and sounds. But the eye must be open to catch the radiating light and the beaming glory of the celestial city; the ear must be turned thither to catch “the music of the place.”

It is to be feared, however, that there is a want of sufficiently full conviction as to our duty in this matter. Every one admits that he experiences a great loss in not attaining to the “assur-

ance of hope." But there is more than a personal loss in it. We need to be reminded that there are obligations, as well as privileges, connected with this subject. The influences resulting from our enjoyment of the assurance of hope, would greatly affect the interests of others.

We owe it to God, to our fellow men, and to ourselves, to become as fully prepared for heaven, and as fully assured of that preparedness, as possible. The happiness of a child is the joy of his affectionate parents. There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repents. And if from repentance he goes on to higher and higher degrees of spiritual life, even to an unwavering hope, it must enhance that joy proportionally. Does our low degree of religious principle and emotion, our doubting and gloom, or our insensibility, either glorify or gratify our Father in heaven? No, they must grieve Him. And are we not verily bound to please Him? Surely no obligation can be higher or stronger. To say we owe it to ourselves, may be but another way of repeating the declaration that we owe it to God. But the obligation to others in this respect is very manifest. We are bound to our neighbor in many things negative, as not to injure him in his health, wealth, or good name. But that is only the inferior part of our duty. We must also, as far as possible, promote his highest excellence and happiness. Conceive then what an influence one Christian can exert, to elevate the thoughts and feelings of others towards the better state, and to aid them in preparation for it, by having his own views of that state clear and familiar, his personal hope of it strong, his preparation for it manifest, and his consequent joy a perpetual sunshine to himself and all around him! This is being a "living epistle, known and read of all men." This is being "the light of the world, the salt of the earth."

The awakened soul seeks to know that he is reconciled to God. Almost every truly regenerated person has persevered in importunate prayer until that end has been attained. It becomes then an important inquiry, Why the same persons do not, in the same way, resolve to "make their calling and election sure?" We believe it may be attributed, in a great degree, to the influence which comes to them from the church; for it is remarkable, that the greater part of the converts of any period do not gather their views from the whole Bible, so much as from the particular class of passages then most in the thoughts and affections of the church.

Older Christians and preachers are, therefore, bound to keep the glories of heaven, and its high attractions vividly in the view of younger Christians; and to dwell much in conversation, exposition, and prayer, upon those passages which describe the nature of the heavenly rest, which shew the qualifications for it, and which contain the assurance of it to those who have these qualifications. It would produce a great and blessed change, if this holy theme were more frequent in the meditations and conversation of God's children, as well as in the exhibitions of the pulpit and press.

We would suggest to our fellow pilgrims some practical counsels founded on this subject.

1. Obtain the most clear and comprehensive view of the heavenly state which the Scriptures present. For this purpose, study the Bible with the aid of references. The perusal of Baxter's *Saint's Rest*, of Howe's *Blessedness of the Righteous*, and similar works would conduce to the same end.

2. Study the Scriptural grounds of expecting heaven; and apply them prayerfully to your own case.

3. Regard the assurance of hope as attainable through the grace of God; as eminently desirable, as worthy of the greatest sacrifices and efforts it may require; as an actual duty, indifference to which is an evil sign.

4. Seek to promote in others the same desire and purpose.

5. Have specific seasons of prayer alone, and sometimes with others, for the obtaining this blessing, and asking God to bestow it on others. Remember especially ministers in your prayers; that God may enable them to preach as from amid the very glories of heaven, and with the sweet assurance of their own interest in eternal life.

6. Give Christ the place in your conceptions of Heaven, which he occupies in the Bible descriptions of it. "To depart and be with Christ," was the sum of Paul's desires and hopes. The person of Christ was prominent in John's vision of it. That the disciples might be with him, to see the glory which he had with the Father, was the gracious desire, and fervent prayer of the Redeemer. "Looking for, and hasting to, the coming of the Lord," was the characteristic of men whose life "was hid with Christ in God," — to whom the future had no glory of which he was not the source. Let the glorified person of Christ be more to you than all the world can give, and all the universe contains.

OBSERVATIONS ON MEN, BOOKS, AND THINGS.

SACRED RHETORIC.—Under this name, Professor Ripley, of the Newton Theological Institution, has issued a treatise on “The Composition and Delivery of Sermons.” Much has been written, and well written, on these subjects, and much that has been useful. But while we would not undervalue the instructions given to young candidates for the pulpit, we are more and more convinced, that, in this great matter of preaching, there is “a grace beyond the reach of art.” The success of some preachers, and the failure of others, which can be referred to no obvious causes, can be explained only on the supposition that it is a special gift. Still, this gift may be greatly improved by cultivation and exercise. Let us be thankful to Professor Ripley for lending his aid to those who seek such improvement. — It is generally supposed that sermonizing, in our times, is very far in advance of what it used to be. But if it be tested by its effects on the popular mind, this may well be doubted. What living preacher produces such impressions by his oratory as are recorded of Whitefield and Edwards? Or we may go back one hundred years beyond them. It is recorded of Dr. Chaderton, who died in his hundred and third year, and who was one of King James’s Bible translators, that in his old age, he was invited to preach while visiting his native county of Lancashire. Having held forth for two full hours, he paused and said: “I will no longer trespass upon your patience.” But the whole congregation cried out with one consent: “For God’s sake, go on, go on!” And he accordingly proceeded much longer to their great admiration and delight. Such an incident may well illustrate the following remarks in Coleridge’s *Literary Remains*: “When, after reading the biographies of Walton and his contemporaries, I reflect on the crowded congregations who, with intense eagerness, came to their hour-long and two-hour-long sermons, I cannot but doubt the fact of any true progression, moral or intellectual, in the mind of the many. The tone, the manner, the anticipated sympathies, in the sermons of an age, form the best moral criterion of the character of that age.”

REPUBLICAN CHRISTIANITY. — This is a spirited volume, from the pen of Rev. E. L. Magoon, of Cincinnati. It is one of three or four which he has recently issued in rapid succession. Though his reading has obviously been immense, and his memory is marvellous, we doubt whether any mind can long continue in such a strain of authorship, without becoming weak and dilute in its effusions at last. A prosperous merchant, retiring from the Canton trade, is said to have had painted upon the pannels of his carriage, at the suggestion of a wag-gish friend, the picture of a tea-chest, with the motto, “*Tu doces,*” — *Thou teachest!* What teaching it might furnish beyond a satire on the unconscious millionaire, we know not; unless it be that no quantity of the fragrant leaf can produce more than its proportionate number of cups of the full strength of aromatic infusion. This book, however, has a strong flavor of Young Hyson, and pertains to the

"cups that cheer, but not inebriate." It has three parts, describing, in succession, "the republican character of Jesus Christ," "the republican constitution of the primitive Church," and "the republican influence of Christian doctrine." Each of these parts, by logic or fancy, is divided into five chapters, and each of these is subdivided into three sections. Consequently, the reader, if he pleases, can "imbibe" the whole in equal proportions. We cannot refrain from expressing some dislike to the phrase, "the republican character of Jesus Christ." It savors a little of the insolent familiarity of the red republicans of France, who speak of our Lord as the "Great Democrat;" while some of our own cadaverous radicals call him the "Great Come-outer." The Saviour is King, — and a King *in* Zion; and for asserting this claim, he was crucified.

MAN PRIMEVAL. — The Rev. Dr. Harris, a celebrated writer on practical religion, and a theological instructor among the Dissenters in England, is now giving forth a series of "contributions to theological science." Of his former contribution, "The Preadamite Earth," we have had occasion to speak in a previous number of this publication. "Man Primeval" is the second volume in course, and abounds with ingenious and original speculations on "the constitution and primitive condition of the human being," and on the laws of progression in the Divine manifestation by the creation of man. It is a nut for the teeth of such as are fond of metaphysics, and of inquiring into such subjects as sensation, reason, voluntariness, obligation, dependence, and the reasons of things which we see in human nature. For the consolation of such, we quote the following classical passage from Bunyan's vision: "Then said some at the table, 'Nuts spoil tender teeth, especially the teeth of children:' which, when Gaius heard, he said:

'Hard texts are nuts, (I will not call them cheaters,) Whose shells do keep their kernels from the eaters; Open the shells, and you shall have the meat; They here are brought for you to crack and eat.'"

Let the men of strong grinders and energetic digestion come to this rich and ample feast.

HISTORY OF AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSIONS. — The title of this book excites a painful sensation, at the thought that our sectarian differences should be carried out into the holy work of missions, and should label off these sacred enterprizes with the names of division and the shibboleths of party. But it is far better that our Baptist brethren should enter the field under their own distinctive banner, than not to invade it at all. The English Baptists were much in advance of their brethren in this country; but the American Baptists, though late, have gone into the business with such zeal, activity, and success, that already this history is called for. It is a well-written and interesting volume, from the pen of Professor Gammell, of Brown University. We take pleasure in referring our readers to the book.

THE EARTH AND MAN.—This volume contains the course of lectures delivered in the French language, in this city, last winter, and translated by Professor Felton, of Harvard College. They were originally printed as they were uttered, in that excellent and valuable journal, the *Daily Evening Traveller*. The lectures, collected in this beautiful volume, are in a somewhat improved form, and are furnished with some valuable plates and maps. The subject of which it treats, forms a new science; and is, probably, more fully presented in it, than in any other book in any language. It investigates the relations of nature to history, and of the earth to man. It abounds in striking facts, and startling conclusions; and contains, as we may well say, “a world of information.” It is pervaded by a truly religious spirit, and presents a most cheering prospect as to the providential indications of the destiny which awaits the human race even in the present world. We earnestly commend this work, and its gifted author, to every one who is able to read, and think, and feel.

We may here remark, that the five books just noticed are all published, and that in very handsome form, by Gould, Kendall, and Lincoln, of this city. It is to be hoped that their energy in the publishing business may prove as profitable to them as it is to the public.

THE CATECHISM TESTED BY THE BIBLE.—Rev. A. R. Baker, of Medford, has prepared under this title, a most elaborate “question-book on the topics in the Assembly’s Shorter Catechism; for families, Sabbath Schools, Bible-classes, and Churches.” The first volume is devoted to the *thirty-eight* doctrinal questions in the Catechism. The second volume, which is rather larger, is occupied with the *sixty-nine* practical questions. The two volumes may be had bound in one, making a neat little volume of nearly three hundred pages. After a thorough examination of the work, we can pronounce it as orthodox as the Catechism itself, which is inferior in orthodoxy to no book but the Bible alone. That admirable “form of sound words” is thoroughly “tested” by a rigid analysis of it into all its parts, and an application to each of them of the Scripture testimony on the subject. The author appears to understand well the use of the proper helps to his undertaking; and he may say with Ralph Cudworth: “For our parts, we neither call philology, nor yet philosophy, our mistress, but serve ourselves of either as occasion requireth.” As a favorable specimen of the method of the book, we would refer to the tenth lesson in the first volume, on the doctrine of the Trinity. We know not how the young, or the old, can obtain the unspeakable benefit of a full Christian indoctrination, better than by a careful study of Mr. Baker’s book. This mode of instruction has always stood in high favor with the best and ablest divines in every age. “Though sermons,” says Thomas Fuller, “give the most sail to men’s souls, catechising layeth the best ballast in them, keeping them steady from being carried away with every wind of doctrine.”

While we are upon the Assembly’s Catechism, of which, within a few years, it is known that more than a million of copies have been

put into circulation in our own country, we would say a word on a kindred subject; — we mean the New England Primer. And this we do, because a very large proportion of the recent issues of the Catechism is in reprints of the Primer, which is chiefly reprinted on account of this part of its contents. One "Antiquary" has been giving a series of criticisms on the Primer, in the "Cambridge Chronicle." He shews that we are ignorant of its author, and of the date of its first publication; that no copy of the earliest editions is known to be extant; and that, in various editions, down to our own times, it has suffered numerous alterations, most of them for the worse, and many of them wholly unjustifiable. There is hardly any of its contents which has not been tampered with, except the "Shorter Catechism." We have not the room for a few strictures to which "Antiquary" has made himself liable. But we would suggest to the Publishing Committee of the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, — a committee which has several competent antiquarians in its number, to collate all the best editions of the New England Primer they can find, and to publish a carefully revised edition, with brief annotations where necessary.

To return to our text, we would "just add by way of application," that we learn with much pleasure that a large impression of Mr. Baker's volumes has gone off with great rapidity, and that a stereotyped edition is to be prepared with all possible despatch, by John P. Jewett, of this city.

AN ADDRESS TO THE SUFFOLK NORTH ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONAL MINISTERS. — In looking over this book, written by J. P. Lesley, and its appended sermons, our eye fell on these words, P. 128: "And very little foxes, and very small fire-brands will serve the enemy's purpose." The author of this book, and the pastor of the Unitarian Church in Charlestown, by means of this book between them, seem to have set the standing corn of the Philistines on fire in one spot. At the recent meeting of the American Unitarian Association, the minister referred to, spoke of this book; and said that this and one or two other publications, naming them, had "mapped out work enough to last his Orthodox friends through summer and dog-days, at least." The book has rekindled the animosities of such men as the gentleman above named; but we presume that no member of the Suffolk North Association will put pen to paper about it. The author applied to that body for licensure. They were unwilling to grant his request. He therefore became convinced that ministerial associations are dangerous to the peace and liberties of the churches. Had the "village Hampden" been silenced by courtly favors, the cause of liberty might have suffered greatly. Had Mr. Lesley been admitted to the Association at his request, the churches would never have known what they had lost; any more than we now think they will appreciate his pure and disinterested zeal in the cause of religious liberty. This book is noticeable only in view of the rancor in the bosoms of certain men towards orthodox men and things, which finds vent when any one, professedly of our household, proves a foe to us. As for those Unitarians who exult at such a book as this, we would

only remind them that, had they earlier adopted the plan which now seems to be gaining favor with them, of making test acts, and had taken the bold and manly stand of our Suffolk North Association, in repudiating heretical men, while they might have been abused for it, they would have saved themselves much trouble. As to the Association, we thank them for the service done to the churches by their independent action. As to the church in Milton, we mourn that such a man should, in any way, have been imposed upon them. As to Mr. Lesley, we have no rod in our *fascies* small enough to give him a chastisement which would not be more than his imbecility could endure.

ANNALS OF SALEM. — Rev. Mr. Felt, who four years ago gave us the first volume of the second edition of his annals of the City of Peace, has, at last, afforded us the other volume. It is, what it purports to be, a collection of annals, giving us the successive years of that ancient and honorable place, in reference to whose Indian name, Nahumkeek, Cotton Mather says that he has "somewhere met with an odd observation, that the name of it was rather Hebrew, than Indian; for *nahum* signifies *comfort*, and *keek* signifies an *haven*; and our English not only found it an Haven of Comfort, but happened also to put another Hebrew name upon it; for they called it *Salem*, for the *peace* which they had and hoped in it; and so it is called unto this day." Mr. Felt's accumulations, collected with such indefatigable research and scrupulous fidelity, will oblige all the future constructors of New England history to become his debtors. They will find themselves heavily in his books; for they will have to bring much of their building material from his well-stocked lumber-yard, where is gathered all that modern industry can obtain from the ancient forests of our colonial history.

THE LIFE OF THOMAS HOOKER. — This is the sixth volume of the biographical series, issued by the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society under the general title, "Lives of the Chief Fathers of New England." Inasmuch as four of these six volumes were written by three of the editors of this work, we are precluded from speaking so freely of the series, as might otherwise be expected. But of this particular volume we can frankly speak, as one whose author is a worthy descendant of its subject. Dr. Hooker, with true filial piety, not to say an almost Chinese idolatry of parentage, has collected and embalmed every remaining relic of his famous ancestor, the founder of Hartford church and town. If there is any thing on his pages at which we might take exception, it is the precedence which seems to be assigned to Thomas Hooker over John Cotton. We suppose, however, that every one must be allowed to hurrah for his own hero; and we consent that "our brethren at the Connecticut" should exalt their venerated Hooker and Davenport with whatever notes of pre-eminence they please, provided only they do not insist that "we of the Bay" should add our unqualified "Amen." — Thomas Hooker, in one respect, is entitled to stand one of the first among the "chief fathers;" his descendants being very numerous, and many of them highly distinguished for usefulness and honor. More than forty of them,

including Presidents Edwards, Dwight, and Woolsey, are on the rolls of the Christian ministry; as many of his female descendants have intermarried with clergymen; and numerous others have served the public in stations of high trust and honor. And so, between the progenitor and his progeny, it is proved out and out, that "children's children are the crown of old men, and the glory of children are their fathers."

A PILGRIM OF NINETY YEARS.—Such was Mrs. Abigail Bailey, of whom a memoir has just appeared, written by Rev. D. O. Morton, and published by the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society. By common consent, ministers' wives are expected to be pattern women; and this "mother in Israel," who, like her namesake, the spouse of David, "was a woman of good understanding," may serve as a pattern to other ladies who are wedded to the reverend clergy. Though of slender constitution, and sorely shaken by sickness in early days, Mrs. Bailey lived, through a laborious and useful life, to a good old age, and a triumphant death. This reminds us of a passage in the diary of Rev. Michael Wigglesworth, the ancient pastor of Malden. It is dated June 20th, 1652, when he was about one and twenty years old, and was a tutor in Harvard College. "In our President's (Henry Dunster's) exposition (in the College-Hall,) I found sweet encouragement in regard of my bodily weakness, occasionally fetched from that passage, Isai. xl. 30, 31: 'It may be thou art sickly. Why, the Lord is thy Physician, who healeth thee. He can make thee strong in thy age, though thou be weakly in thy youth.'"

THE GOOD AND THE BAD IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.—Had the writer of this tract lived in the old struggle between Christianity and Paganism, when the latter had all the antiquity, architecture, sculpture, and music, on its side, as well as all the priestly splendor, and vestal virginity, and all the deep sincerity of superstitious ignorance, he would have penned just such a treatise, gravely setting forth "the good and the bad," of Paganism; and asking with wiseacre solemnity, Whether Paganism "is to be destroyed or reformed?" He seems to have gone abroad on his travels, a stiff young Protestant. But he is destined to become a warning to all well-meaning sophomores just starting to see the world. He soon beholds and hears some things that are new to him, whereupon he at once finds out the narrowness of his honest old home-bred "Yankee notions." As jugs are easiest carried about by the ears, so he is carried captive by the sweet chants of caged-up nuns. He becomes a vessel "with the handle all on the other side." Oh, those Gregorian chants, that warbling sanctity, that evening hymn at the Convent of Trinita dei Monti! "It seems as if some choir of the blessed were chanting a celestial hymn; as if that tender and plaintive melody, which comes to bear up his soul from gloom, were the distant music of angels." Poor soul, he little thinks that if those pining girls sang as they felt, they would be iterating the melancholy cry of Sterne's starling: "I can't get out! I can't get out!" He is now ready to discover that even monkery is a holy and a lovely thing;

and has his sentimental raptures about "the lonely imprisoned cell," which we take to be a cell shut up all by itself within another cell. His ideas take a wonderful expansion. His soul grows too big to contain itself; and he issues a pamphlet to persuade the Pope and his crew to give up some of their nonsense; and to persuade the Protestant world to fall in love with the "sisters of charity," and to make "a Jacob's ladder" of the sign of the cross. If this gentleman, (we will do him the kindness not to repeat his name,) after writing his pamphlet, had sealed up the manuscript in a bottle for "nine years," and then read it in soberer mood, he would have been enraged at himself for scribbling this "letter from Rome." As it is, he must get off some more folly of the same sort, to back up what he has now promulged; or he must, like a true penitent, confess and deplore his inexcusable bewilderment; or, which is more probable, he will keep himself quiet, in hopes that this act of indiscretion will shortly be forgiven, and soon after forgotten.

CELEBRATIONS. — The disposition to notice the anniversaries of important events is becoming very strong in New England. Not only such as are of general interest to the whole people, but such as have a restricted and local interest, are often observed with surprising spirit and enthusiasm. Thus the century during which a town has existed, or the half century of a pastor's ministrations, will be observed with a vehemence of zeal scarcely known out of New England. Within a month, one of each has been observed in this vicinity. On the 23d of May, the town of Malden, at an expense of several thousand dollars, freely expended by the ardor of its citizens, celebrated the two hundred years since, by votes of the Great and General Court, "Mysticke-side men were set off into a town by themselves, to be called Mauldon." The events of that day will long be remembered on the beautiful spot where they took place. Temperance, order, and harmony of feeling, combined with an intense excitement, and almost extravagant exultation, resulted in a day which leaves behind it, none but the most pleasing remembrances.

The other celebration to which we allude, was that of the half-century of the Senior pastor of Wrentham, which was observed in that place, with high satisfaction, on the 12th of June. The venerable Elisha Fisk preached in the pulpit, whence he had dispensed the gospel for a thirty-sixth part of the time since the gospel began to be proclaimed at all. Thirty-six such links in the chain would make a fine "apostolical succession." The good patriarch well magnified his office, which, as John Newton used to say, "is the worst of all trades, but the best of all professions." He seems likely to obtain the wish of Augustine, who often desired that Christ, when he came, might find him "aut precantem, aut predicantem," — either praying or preaching. His example rebukes those many pastors, "who too slightly and suddenly quit what they had before so seriously and solemnly accepted; as if their pastoral charges were, like their upper garments, to be put off at pleasure, to cool themselves in every heat of passion." And no less does the example of his flock, united, tranquil, and prosperous, through his pastorate of fifty years, reprove

those parishes which distract themselves with frequent mutations of their spiritual guides, and which seem "to nothing fixed, but love of change." When we consider the ordinary uncertainty of health and life, and how much this uncertainty is enhanced by the exhausting nature of faithful ministerial labor, we shall not deem it strange that there should be but eight pastors in all Massachusetts who have survived to preach on the fiftieth anniversary of their ordination. Besides this, one half of the Orthodox churches in this State have been organized within five and twenty years; and many more were not in existence fifty years ago. Ministers of the gospel are the cheapest and pleasantest conservatives of social order. If they be not the guardians of public morals, then magistrates must be. The people must choose between pastors with their deacons, and lawyers with their deputy-sheriffs. Hence we regard a celebration like that at Wrentham, as an event of real importance to the political scholar; while such as that at Malden claims the attention of the student in the philosophy of history.

ORDINATIONS.

- Apr. 11. Mr. William Olmstead, Mason Village, N. H.
- May 1. Mr. Charles A. Downes, Evangelist, Pembroke, N. H.
- " 16. Mr. John Merrill, Sedgwick Village, Me.
- " 17. Mr. William L. Hyde, Gardiner Village, Me.
- " " Mr. William Clarke, Orford West, N. H.
- " " Mr. Edwin R. Hodgman, Evangelist, Orford West.
- " 25. Mr. Isaac Wethrell, North Chelsea, Ms.
- June 14. Mr. George Gannett, Boothbay Harbor, Me.

INSTALLATIONS.

- Mar. 21. Rev. Matthew D. Gordon, Hollis, N. H.
- " 29. Rev. Silas Aiken, Rutland, Vt.
- Apr. 19. Rev. W. B. Hammond, South Braintree, Ms.
- " 25. Rev. J. H. Pettingill, Second Church, Saybrook, Con.
- May 9. Rev. Joseph D. Hull, Plymouth Hollow, Con.
- " 16. Rev. S. S. Drake, Biddeford, Me.
- " 17. Rev. Stillman Pratt, Melrose Church, Malden, Ms.
- June 6. Rev. Joshua L. Tucker, Holliston, Ms.
- " 7. Rev. Joseph H. Beckwith, Middleton, Vt.
- " " Rev. B. F. Clarke, Rowe, Ms.

DEATHS OF MINISTERS.

- Apr. 24. Rev. Benjamin Wood, Upton, Ms., æ. 76.
- " 25. Rev. Hezekiah Packard, D. D., Salem, æ. 87.
- May 9. Rev. Moses Elliot, Boscawen, N. H., æ. 74.
- " 10. Rev. Malachi Bullard, Jr., Winchendon, Ms., æ. 32.
- " 11. Rev. Jason Park, Barry, Jackson Co., Mich., æ. 70.
- June 9. Rev. Sylvester Dana, Concord, N. H., æ. 79.
- " 19. Rev. William B. Tappan, Grantville, Ms., æ. 54.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

THE subscribers feel it to be of great importance, that there should emanate from this city, a periodical like the CHRISTIAN OBSERVATORY, devoted to the interests of sound doctrine and practical piety. It will be seen, that, under the new arrangements for conducting it, several of our number, including the former Editor of the work, have assumed the direct responsibility of the editorial department. The others stand ready to afford them all the countenance and aid in their power. And we hereby invite the co-operation of our brethren in New England and elsewhere, in promoting the circulation of the OBSERVATORY, and rendering it all that can be desired as an organ of general communication with the public. We live in a day of great excitements, novel speculations, and surprising changes, fitted to awaken our fears as well as our hopes, and calling for the utmost vigilance and activity on the part of the friends of religion, to check every evil tendency, and to favor all the better developments of the times. It is our hope, that this publication, by the strenuous support of our brethren in the ministry and the Churches, may prove a strong defence of the truths we love, and a permanent depository of such historical facts and spirited reasonings as will afford a powerful support to orthodox Congregationalism, in its simple, spiritual and scriptural belief and order.

Boston, Dec. 4, 1848.

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CHRISTIAN OBSERVATORY.

THE Publishers of the CHRISTIAN OBSERVATORY take great pleasure in announcing to the subscribers for that work, and to the public at large, that they have made arrangements to carry it on with increased efficiency and strength. At a meeting of ministers such as could be conveniently assembled, the opinion was unanimously expressed, that the work must go on under such auspices as should ensure it a vigorous support, and render it, as far as may be, an accredited organ for that portion of the religious community which may be interested therein. The following gentlemen were appointed to take the editorial charge of the work : Rev. N. Adams, D. D., Rev. J. A. Albro, D. D., Rev. E. Beecher, D. D., Rev. E. N. Kirk, Rev. A. W. McClure, Rev. W. A. Stearns, and Rev. A. C. Thompson.

These gentlemen have accepted the duty, and have made such a distribution of the labor, as to divide it equally among them, and ensure from each his appropriate share of effort. This arrangement, therefore, being by no means nominal, will bring into the pages of the OBSERVATORY a rich variety of gifts and talents for the edification of its readers. Under these circumstances, the Publishers again offer it to the cordial patronage of the friends of a sound evangelical literature, and of the principles of the honored puritan fathers of New England.

The Publishers solicit the aid of Pastors of Churches, as indispensable to the success of the work. From a desire to favor them as a class, it is furnished to ministers on terms far below what could be afforded, but for the hope of their active support. If each of the five hundred ministers to whom it is sent were to interest himself so far as to obtain for us at least one subscriber, we should feel it as a reciprocating favor, and regard it as the most useful and gratifying of the agencies employed in our behalf.

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VOLUME THIRD.

All new subscribers, paying in advance, may have the first and second volumes, neatly bound in cloth, for one dollar a volume. As we shall hereafter print no more copies than are wanted for actual circulation, we shall not, in future, be able to furnish any back volumes except the first and second as above mentioned.